



## A ONE-STOP RESOURCE FOR PARENTING INFORMATION

**When it comes to providing the foundation for the State's youngest residents, the California Children & Families Commission realizes that it's all about the parents, too.**

Parents concerned about doing the best for their children get a boost from the California Children & Families Commission with the introduction of its new, toll-free number *800-KIDS-025*. The 800 number, which serves both the English and Spanish-speaking communities, is a resource that provides callers with written information on how to make the most of a child's early years and how to stop smoking.

"The arrival of a newborn in a family's life is a joyous occasion, but one that also leads to a variety of questions from parents

about how to provide the best care," said California Children & Families Commission Executive Director Jane Henderson. "Parents need answers about child safety, immunizations and many other topics, which makes *800-KIDS-025* a valuable tool in providing them with the information they need."

The California Children & Families Commission, funded by Prop. 10's 50-cent-per-pack tobacco tax, is an unprecedented investment in the health and welfare of the state's youngest children from the prenatal period to age five. Studies have shown that chil-

dren's experiences in the first five years of life have a significant impact on their educational, social and emotional future.

All callers to *800-KIDS-025* can receive by mail an informative *It's All About The Kids* Information Kit, which is available in both English and Spanish. The topics covered in the packet include Child Care, Child Safety, Literacy, Smoking Cessation, Child Development, Immunization, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, Dental Care, Prenatal Care and Nutrition.

Here are just some of the tips included in the *It's All About The Kids* Information Kit:

- To protect your child, get baby shots and booster shots on time, every time. There are immunizations for childhood diseases such as diphtheria, measles, polio, whooping cough and others. These diseases can cause serious health problems.
- Read aloud to your child every day. If you aren't a good reader, programs in your community like Even Start can provide opportunities for you to improve.
- Breastfeeding is best for babies and will help them stay healthy.

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- Give your child healthy food and drinks for healthy teeth and gums.
- Children who breathe second-hand smoke are more likely to suffer from pneumonia, bronchitis and other lung diseases. These children have more ear infections and also are more likely to develop asthma.
- California law requires a child to ride in a car seat until he or she is four years old and weighs 40 pounds or more.

"Any information that will help families who are expecting a newborn or who are already parenting is very much needed, especially in the African American community," said Zola Jones, Executive Director of Great Beginnings For Black Babies (GBBB) and its Black Infant Health Program. "In our community, about 50 percent of children are not being immunized properly, and Black infants die at twice the rate of infants from other ethnic groups in the state. The Commission's Information Kit will be useful to us and to all expecting and parenting mothers."

To receive your copy of the *It's All About The Kids* Information Kit, call 800-KIDS-025. Operators are available to assist callers from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays. 🖐

## THE DANGERS OF SMOKING AND PREGNANCY



**TIPS TO HAVING A HEALTHY BABY AND FAMILY. Three of the leading causes of death in the African American community – heart disease, lung cancer and stroke – are also the most preventable.**

Smoking is the leading contributor to these diseases, so stopping the habit is one of the keys to their prevention.

Statistics show that 18 to 20 percent of pregnant women use tobacco products, a practice that puts babies at risk for low birth weight, infant asthma and even fatal illnesses. Women who smoke during pregnancy have 20 to 30 percent of all the low birth weight babies born, 14 percent of premature births and 10 percent of all infant deaths. Pregnant women who smoke also put themselves, their children and families at risk of developing tobacco-related illnesses. To reduce these serious health risks, they must stop smoking.

Even non-smoking pregnant women are prone to developing

lung cancer, asthma and other diseases by inhaling secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke comes from the burning end of a smoker's cigarette, cigar or pipe and the dangerous nicotine and carbon monoxide these tobacco products send into the air. Pregnant women exposed to secondhand smoke also are exposing their babies to these poisons.

Cancer is the seventh leading cause of death in African American children. Children exposed to secondhand smoke not only increase their chances of developing cancer-related illnesses but also are more likely to become smokers themselves and begin smoking as teenagers. From 1991 to 1997, smoking among African American high school students increased 80 percent, with the most dramatic increase occurring among males.

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The best way to reduce your baby's and your family's risks from smoking is by eliminating tobacco use from your daily life. While it may be difficult to avoid secondhand smoke altogether, here are some suggestions to help you minimize the risk to you and your children:

- Ask visiting smokers to smoke outside.
- If your spouse smokes, ask that he/she smoke outside of the house to reduce exposure to your baby.
- Help those whom you care about to stop smoking.

If you are pregnant and are a smoker, the sooner you make the choice to quit, the better your chances will be for having a healthy baby! Remember, reducing

the number of cigarettes smoked or changing to a "lighter" brand may not reduce the health risk to your baby. Only by quitting smoking will you and your baby benefit!

We are encouraged to smoke by advertising, the accessibility of tobacco products and by the example of parents and friends who smoke. While these factors can make it difficult to reject the habit and even more difficult to quit, there are life-threatening reasons that should make this decision easy. Choose health for you and your baby by quitting smoking and by reducing your exposure to secondhand smoke today! For more information on quitting, call 800-KIDS-025. 🖐

## 7 Steps to a Healthy Baby and a Healthy You!

1. Make a choice to quit smoking
2. Set a date to quit smoking
3. Enlist the support of family and friends
4. Find activities to help you cope: walk, drink water, chew sugarless gum
5. Speak to your doctor about prescription and nonprescription smoking cessation products
6. Join a support group
7. Contact the American Lung Association at (800) 586-4872, the American Cancer Society at (800) ACS-2345 or (800) KIDS-025 for information on resources and support.

Remember: Healthy babies and children are the result of healthy mothers! 🖐

## A DREAM FOR MY CHILD

**Four year-old Asjua Imani McGarvey (pictured) is featured this month in A Dream For My Child.**



Her mother, Jetta McGarvey, wrote the following: *My dream for my child is that one day she will be an educated, positive, well-rounded, peaceful soul who is strong in mind and spirit. I can only pray that she finds good health and success in all that she chooses.* 🖐

**It's All About The Kids**  
P.O. Box 481296  
Los Angeles, CA 90048



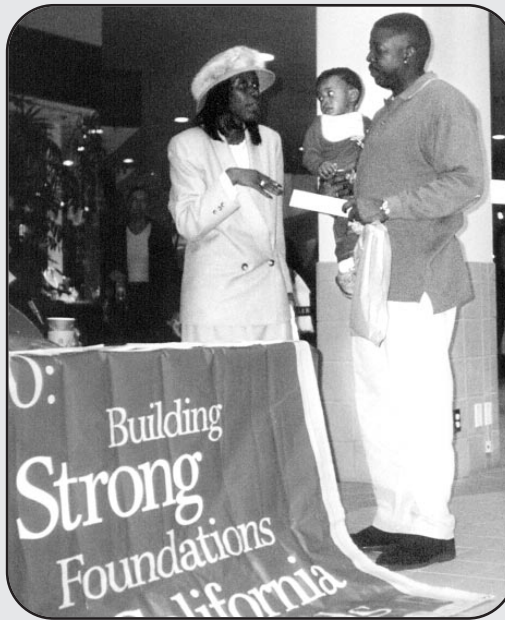
## TIP OF THE MONTH

How to Lower Your Baby's Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS):

- Place your baby on his/her back to sleep;
- No smoking around your baby;
- Make sure your baby is sleeping on a firm, flat surface;
- Keep your baby warm, not hot;
- Make sure your baby has regular check-ups and immunizations;
- Breastfeed your baby.

*Tip of The Month provided by Great Beginnings For Black Babies and the California SIDS Program. 🖐*

## MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. EVENT AT BALDWIN HILLS CRENSHAW PLAZA



Adrienne Love Johnson, Community Outreach Worker for Great Beginnings For Black Babies, shares information with William Rutledge of Los Angeles and his son Myles, 15 months, at the GBBB community outreach program during Martin Luther King, Jr. celebrations at the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Mall in January. The California Children & Families Commission participated in the program. 🖐



Please don't smoke  
in my world.

**California Children & Families Commission**

**Funded by Prop. 10**